THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA) : (a) No reports of distress sale of foodgrains, conforming to Fair Average Quality (FAQ) specifications, have been received by this Department from Orissa or other States during the current Kharif Marketing Season 2002-03 and Rabi Marketing Season 2003-04.

(b) and (c) The FCI has opened 20 paddy purchase centres in 6 Revenue Districts of Orissa during the current Kharif Marketing Season 2002-03 to extend the benefit of Minimum Support Prices to farmers. The centres have been opened in consultation with the State Government and keeping in view locations from where reports of distress sale were received in the past. The FCI has given adequate publicity through the press release in local Oriya Newspapers and also through distribution of leaflets in the local language to educate the farmers about the arrangements made for the procurement of paddy under the MSP operations.

Instructions have been issued to the FCI to ensure that necessary proof / documents are obtained from the millers at the time of procurement of levy rice to ensure that the benefit of MSP has been passed on to the farmers.

Accumulation of levy sugar

5009. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA :

DR. AKHILESH DAS :

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether levy sugar has not been lifted and hence accumulated with the sugar mills;

(b) if so, the unlifted sugar stocks with the mills as on the 1st March, 2003;

(c) whether this has come in the way of the mills clearing the sugarcane growers dues;

(d) whether the mills have sought permission to sell out these stocks in the open market, even at prices below the levy sugar rates; and

(e) whether a lot of this sugar has already been sold in the open market causing depression in open market; and

(f) if so, what is Government's information in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD) : (a) and (b) The lifting of levy sugar has been reduced considerably. As on 1.3.2003, a quantity of 3.32 lakh M.Ts. of levy sugar remained unlifted as per the reports received from the sugar factories during the season 2002-2003.

(c) to (e) Keeping accumulation of stocks in view, relief has been provided by way of permitting factories to sell equivalent quantity of unlifted levy sugar stock in the open market at rates deemed appropriate by them.

(f) Release of non-levy sugar in lieu of the unlifted levy sugar has not affected the prices of sugar in the open market as the quantity involved was rather small.

Lifting of foodgrains by States

5010. SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI BARUPAL :
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :
SHRI DATTA MEGHE :

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Prime Minister has called an all party meeting to discuss the country's godowns overflowing with foodgrains and the States, including those which pleaded for foodgrains aid to combat drought last year, have been extremely tardy about the lifting of foodgrains allocated by the Centre;

(b) if so, whether this problem alongwith failure of PDS system was also discussed in the meeting;

(c) if so, whether any concrete measures or action plan has been worked out in this regard and the views/suggestions of all the participants have been incorporated;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps being taken to implement them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA) : (a) to (e) An All Party Meeting is proposed to be convened to discuss and review measures to strengthen the Public Distribution System in the States and Union Territories.